

# NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



## AS I SEE IT

### **Global Schools Network: Uniting School Districts in International Education**

*December 7, 2010*

Providing jobs for the millions of Americans who are currently unemployed is a top priority for national and state leaders. Although here in North Carolina we have seen our unemployment numbers ease downward, we must remain focused on doing all we can to attract new employers to our state. Thanks go to our friends in the Department of Commerce whose work helps North Carolina remain among the top choices for international companies looking to locate in the U.S.

In addition to this work at the state level, a strong school district can also be a valuable economic development tool. Our schools and teachers are the ones who provide students with the skills they need to thrive in the global economy. By establishing world class school districts in our state, we become more attractive to international companies, we bring in more new jobs and our state's economy will be more sustainable in the long term.

Together with State Superintendent June Atkinson and Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco, I recently hosted a meeting of district superintendents and economic development leaders to launch the NC Global Schools Network (GSN). The GSN will be a network of school districts and communities committed to providing visionary international education programs that prepare our students to compete, collaborate, and communicate in the global marketplace. As Network members, school systems will support programming in K-12 schools dedicated to enhanced cultural exchange, language learning, and international education.

Led by VIF International Education, the GSN will bring together the expertise of the Center for International Understanding, the Public School Forum, NC STEM, and World View. These partners have a strong record of experience in promoting international education throughout our state. As part of the GSN, these organizations are now working together to provide a comprehensive set of international education programs and services to globally-minded school districts.

Over the next three years, we plan to grow the GSN network to include at least one school system from each of the seven economic regions of North Carolina. I encourage all district leaders to contact VIF International Education about becoming a member of the Global Schools Network. If North Carolina is going to continue to compete and succeed in the global economy, we must take advantage of the important opportunities programs such as the GSN offer school districts and our state.

Bill Harrison, Chairman  
State Board of Education